

**SEPTEMBER 2003 AGENDA**

SUBJECT California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE): Including, but not limited to, an Update on Standards Setting.	X	ACTION
	X	INFORMATION
		PUBLIC HEARING

Recommendation:

Take action as deemed necessary and appropriate.

Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

The first standards setting for the CAHSEE was based on the test results of volunteer ninth graders from spring 2001. At that time, the SBE set the pass score at 350 on a scale of 250 to 450. For mathematics, that is 55 percent correct and for English-language arts, it is 60 percent correct. Since that time, Assembly Bill (AB) 1609 passed. This bill prohibited ninth graders from taking the CAHSEE in order to have a census testing of all tenth graders. SBE directed the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct a standards setting on the first census administration of the CAHSEE, which was in spring 2003.

Summary of Key Issue(s)

Educational Testing Service (ETS) will conduct a standards setting September 18-20, 2003, using the Bookmark Method. This method was used by the American Institutes for Research for the first standards setting in 2001. A brief description of the Bookmark Method and the process that will be used in the standards setting is attached. This item will come back to SBE in November for action, with the results of the standards setting, for the SBE to reevaluate the current cut scores on CAHSEE.

The primary reason for conducting a second standards setting is because the original data was from volunteer ninth graders, not tenth graders for whom the exam is mandatory. The voluntary versus mandatory nature of the test administration may have provided incomplete data, particularly in subgroups. Census testing will provide valid data, as well as a better picture, of the overall performance of a single cohort of students at one point in time.

Conducting a standards setting based on a census administration of all tenth graders in 2003 may also produce different results because according to the AB 1609 Study Report, standards based instruction and instructional materials were further along in the implementation process for 2003 than in 2001.

Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate)

None.

Attachment(s)

Attachment(s)

Attachment 1 Standards Setting Methodology for CAHSEE Abstract (Pages 1-2)

Standard Setting Methodology for CAHSEE

Abstract

Educational Testing Service (ETS) will facilitate a standard setting workshop September 18–20, 2003, to reevaluate the current cut scores for the English-language arts and mathematics portions of the CAHSEE. The standards setting will be based on the results of the first census administration held in spring 2003. California Department of Education (CDE) has recruited participants for four panels to participate in the workshop—two panels for English-language arts and two panels for mathematics. One panel in each subject area will be composed primarily of California English-language arts and mathematics teachers and administrators while the other will be composed primarily of stakeholders such as business and community people.

ETS will use the Bookmark Method that was used in the first standards setting for the CAHSEE in May 2001. This Method requires that panelists work through a test booklet that has been reordered from the easiest items to the hardest items based on item difficulty. That is, the items will be ordered based on how well students performed on them, so the items that students answered correctly most often will be followed by those they were more likely to answer incorrectly. Panelists will be asked to place a bookmark at the point in the ordered test book at which they believe students have demonstrated sufficient knowledge in that subject area to graduate. The Bookmark Method is a procedure for setting performance standards or cut points that has been used by ETS in more than 20 states and has withstood legal challenges.

Each panel will be comprised of approximately 20 panelists. They will be divided into three tables of six to seven panelists per table. One person from each table will be the table leader. The table leaders will receive extra training on facilitating table discussions. Group discussions are conducted at the table level to ensure that everyone has a chance to share their opinion. Panelists will be trained on the Bookmark Method. The panelists will receive the following instructions for placing a bookmark.

1. Read the first item in the ordered item booklet and identify the knowledge and skills required to respond successfully to the item.
2. Review the definition for passing minimally and compare it to the course standards.
3. Find the location in the item set that separates groups of examinees into those who demonstrate sufficient knowledge to pass from those who do not have sufficient knowledge to pass and then place a bookmark at that location in the ordered item set.

Panelists will be split into subject-specific groups to practice the method, review the content standards for their subjects, familiarize them with the definition for passing minimally, and begin the standard setting activities. Standard setting will begin with a review of the ordered item booklet and then proceed with three rounds of placing a bookmark. Key questions that will be

asked of the panelists are: 1) What does a student have to know and be able to do to answer this item correctly; and 2) What makes this item more difficult for a student than the preceding item. Results will be summarized and provided to CDE and the State Board of Education. Summary data will include the impact data, that is, the percentage of students who would pass the test, broken out subgroups. This information will be provided for the recommended cut score as well as alternate cut scores based on standard errors.